

'MOVING ON'
Hendon School, London, 29 April 2008

Touchline Training provided relaxation workshops for four groups of year 11 students for a special event called 'Moving On', prior to the GCSE examinations. A colleague provided peer massage workshops and other organisations provided a range of other activities.

IMPACT Programme - Wellbeing for young people
Evaluation of the relaxation workshops

Aim of workshop:

To provide knowledge and skills that will be of use to year 11 students in the examination period and beyond.

Objectives:

To understand causes of students' stress

To understand how stress can affect the mind and body

To experience some relaxation techniques that may be of use now and in the future

To find out how to get the 3 Cs (calmness, concentration and confidence)

The 4 relaxation workshop sessions were each scheduled to last about 50 minutes to one hour and included three different practical activities to help students in the run up to their GCSE examinations and beyond.

The practical activities were:

- Soapy water – a hand and arm relaxation technique
- Controlled breathing – for relaxation and control of anxiety
- Guided relaxation and visualisation – a 20 minutes session

Evaluation

108 evaluation slips were returned at the end of the sessions.

The students were asked to rate three aspects of the workshop:

- Interesting
- Useful
- Relaxing

The scoring was on a range of 1 (low) to 5 (high). Students could add a comment if they wished.

These are the results converted to percentages:

Rating	1 (Low)	2	3	4	5 (High)	4 + 5
Aspect	%	%	%	%	%	%
Interesting	6.48	4.62	24.0	31.48	33.33	64.81
Useful	5.55	3.7	18.5	37.96	34.25	72.21
Relaxing	3.7	4.62	5.55	22.22	63.88	86.1

Comments of students:

- I would like to do it again.
- Totally worth it, beautiful, amazing.
- Absolutely amazing, thank you so much.
- If you actually record that (guided relaxation commentary) and sell it, I'm sure people will buy it.
- Please provide cookies, warm milk and pillows.
- It made me sleep. I love the guy's voice.
- I found it useful. I found his voice soothing.
- Sehr gut! (Very good!)
- Thank you. I found it very relaxing.
- It allows you to take your mind off a lot of things.
- Paul has a very relaxing voice.
- Thank you for the tip.
- Good thing about the last one (guided relaxation- 20 minutes) was I got to sleep and actually relaxed more.
- I really did relax. Thank you. Reduces stress, very relaxing.
- Thank you very much. I will use all these ideas.
- It is relaxing but do not know if it is for our age, maybe year 7 or year 8. Our age are just overgrown from it.
- Thank you very much. The last activity (guided relaxation) was very useful.
- Already knew controlled breathing. The 20 minutes one would have been better lying down.
- Didn't help
- Didn't relax me.

Staff comments:

- Couldn't do the 20 minutes one (checking the students!) but would really wish I could have. Soapy water was great. Breathing also helped a lot. I believe that there should be more of this for all students. Thank you.
- Any more quick relaxation tips would help with exams around the corner.

Conclusion:

- The workshop was well received.
- The majority of students found it interesting and useful and a high percentage (86.1%) found it relaxing.
- Many students would have liked to lie down for the 20 minutes guided relaxation but space was limited.
- Some other short relaxation techniques could be added to expand the workshop.

Other considerations:

A relaxation workshop before year 11 examinations is a good idea but it would probably be more useful for a range of relaxation techniques to be introduced earlier in the year or in year 10. All techniques need practise and should become integrated into a student's lifestyle.

I would suggest that year 10 and 11 tutors undertake some training so that they are all capable of introducing the techniques to the students and ensuring their use at appropriate times. Relaxation techniques should become integrated into the school curriculum for staff and students, therefore making the activity sustainable.

Anne Crease

Impact Programme, Touchline Training Ltd. May 2008